



NEWSLETTER



Hill County FSA Office

April 2011

Address:

206 25th Ave W Suite 2
Havre MT 59501

Office:

(406) 265-6792 ext. 2
Fax: 406/265-3077
www.fsa.usda.gov/mt

Hours: 8:30 to 4:30 p.m.
Monday to Friday

FSA Office Personnel:

Barbara Brown, ext. 112
Liane Albus, ext. 100
Clint Greytak, ext. 107
Linell Pagar, ext. 101
Rosalie Sather, ext. 105
Lisa Toth, ext. 102
Mike Zook, ext. 111

**County Committee
Members**

Clarence "Fritz" Keller, Chair
Dave Stevenson, Vice
Mary Ruth St. Pierre, Member
Les Kaercher, Member

**Agricultural Lending
Opportunities:**

Questions regarding
obtaining credit to start or
enlarge a farming or ranching
operation; financing
agricultural operating
expenses; or livestock,
machinery purchases may
call the following at (406)357-
2320, ext 2: Miranda
Skoyen, FLO
Richard Nicholson, FLO
Denise Reynolds, FLPT

**Reasonable
Accommodations:**

Persons with disabilities who
require accommodations to
attend or participate in any
FSA programs should contact
the Hill County FSA Office or
the Federal Relay Service at
1-800-877-8339.

CRP General Signup announced for March 14 to April 15, 2011

General Signup for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) began on March 14, 2011, and continues through April 15, 2011. During the signup period, Montana farmers and ranchers may offer eligible land for CRP's competitive general signup at their county Farm Service Agency (FSA) office.

Through the 2008 Farm Bill, CRP is authorized for a maximum enrollment of 32 million acres. USDA estimates that contracts on 3.3 million to 6.5 million acres are scheduled to expire annually between now and 2014. Land currently not enrolled in CRP may be offered in this signup provided all eligibility requirements are met. Additionally, current CRP participants with contracts expiring this fall may make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this signup are scheduled to become effective Oct. 1, 2011. In Montana, 2.9 million acres of the state's 18,721,501 cropland acres are currently actively enrolled in the CRP program. Of the state's active CRP acres; 498,661 acres are scheduled to expire on Sept. 30, 2011; 696,523 acres on Sept. 30, 2012 and 638,841 acres on Sept. 30, 2013.

As administrator of the Conservation Reserve Program, FSA will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using an Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) that assists in calculating the environmental benefits to be gained from the contract. The EBI consists of five environmental factors (wildlife, water, soil, air and enduring benefits). Cost factors are also entered into the equation.

In addition to the general sign-up, FSA's CRP Continuous Sign-up Program is ongoing. Continuous acres represent the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. For more information, visit www.fsa.usda.gov and view *Conservation Programs*.

Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) Signup for 2009 Crop Year ends on July 29, 2011

The 2008 Farm Bill created several new disaster programs. One of the programs, the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), provides financial assistance for crop production and/or quality losses due to a natural disaster. SURE is a total farm revenue disaster program as opposed to the crop disaster programs of previous years, which were primarily production oriented programs. Therefore, all crops that a producer has an interest in are not only evaluated as to the production loss and quality, but revenue as well.

To be eligible for SURE a producer must have at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance; a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops. Producers that have a farming interest physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county by the Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation or a contiguous county and meet the above criteria are eligible for SURE.

In the absence of the Secretarial Disaster Designation producers may be eligible if they suffer at least a 50% production loss on the entire SURE farm due to a natural disaster.

Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage.

PAYMENTS - SURE will issue payments to an eligible producer in the amount equal to 60% of the difference between the program guarantee and the total farm revenue. SURE will pay up to 90% of the crop's normal production on the farm. If you meet the guidelines of the program in 2009, i.e. a 10% production loss (associated with adverse weather) on one crop of economic significance and crop insurance (CAT/NAP) purchased on all 2009 crops (other than the exceptions previously explained), contact the county FSA office as soon as possible. Signup for 2009 crops began January 10, 2011 and ends on July 29, 2011.

County Committee Election Results

Congratulations to Les Kaercher and Mary Ruth St. Pierre! Both were elected to represent farmers in Hill County on the FSA County Committee. Mary Ruth, a long-time county committee advisor, was re-elected to her second consecutive term to represent the area south of Highway 2 between Highway 87 and the Beaver Creek Highway. Les was elected to his first term to represent the area east of the Gilford High Grade Road, west of Highway 87 and south of the Milk River.

The election results for Local Administrative Area #3 are:

Les Kaercher — Elected to the county committee (COC),
Charles Dees — 1st alternate to COC,
Shawn Wall — 2nd alternate to COC

The election results for Local Administrative Area #4 are:

Mary Ruth St. Pierre - Elected to the county committee.

In addition, Richard "Dick" Pollington was ineligible to run due to term limits and has served on the county committee for more than 20 years. We thank Dick for his dedication and hard work knowing it has not always been an easy task. We thank Sharon and his family for their part in giving Dick the time to help out. FSA also appreciates all of the voters for taking the time to complete the election ballot. The county committee system works only because of your participation.

FSA Payment Record

During the last week of January, producers who have received payments from FSA should have also received a CCC-1099-G from the Kansas City office. A CCC-1099-G is a report to the Internal Revenue Service about FSA payments made to producers during the previous calendar year. The CCC-1099-G is a service to help participating producers report taxable income. It is not intended to replace the program participant's responsibility to report income to the IRS.

If you received a CCC-1099-G, we recommend you check the amounts shown with those in your records to see that the amounts are correct. Refunds will no longer be reported on the 1099-G, but will be available online from the FSA Financial Inquiries (FSA-FI) web-based database. Program participants with eAuthentication user ID's and passwords can access their refund information at FSA-FI and select "Inquiry Type 1099/Refund Reports". Refund amounts are displayed on the Producer's Year-to-Date Activity web page.

If you have a question concerning the 1099-G refund information, you may contact your nearest FSA office for assistance in locating the correct payment data. If you choose to visit the office, bring your CCC-1099-G with you.

2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) Signup Underway, Ends June 1

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun and will continue through **June 1, 2011**. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) urges producers to make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, or producers can visit the FSA office to complete their 2011 DCP contract.

Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. FSA will issue advance direct payments beginning Dec. 1, 2010.

2011 Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) Option: June 1 Signup deadline

The Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity.

The **June 1, 2011** deadline is mandatory for all ACRE and DCP participants. FSA will not accept late-filed applications.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. In exchange for participating in ACRE, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

Actively Engaged

USDA has amended the requirements of being 'actively engaged' in farming. These rules apply to eligibility for payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) or Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE).

Normally the stockholder or a member of a legal entity **must** make contributions of active personal labor and/or active personal management for the farming operation. The contributions are to be performed on regular basis, must be identifiable, and separate from the contributions of others.

The exception to this rule for a stockholder or member of a legal entity only occurs when both of the following apply:

- At least half of the interest in the legal entity is held by stockholders or members who are providing active personal labor or active personal management; and
- The total direct payments received by the legal entity and each of the members can't exceed \$40,000.

Farm Loan Programs

The Farm Service Agency is committed to providing family farmers with loans to meet their farm credit needs. If you are having trouble getting the credit you need for your farm, or regularly borrow from FSA, direct and guaranteed loans are currently available.

If you've had a setback and your lender is reluctant to extend or renew your loan, ask your lender about an FSA loan guarantee. Guaranteed loans can reach a maximum of \$1,119,000. Direct farm ownership loans or farm operating loans may be obtained from FSA for a maximum of up to \$300,000.

Producers are encouraged to apply early so that the application and loan can be processed and funded in a timely manner. To find out more about FSA loan programs, contact the county office staff.

Rural Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to rural youths to establish and operate income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5,000. Many farm and even city families have found the Youth Loan program an excellent means to introduce the next generation to the business of agriculture. Is there someone in your family who may qualify?

FSA Spousal Signature Policy

Husbands and wives may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and Commodity Credit Corporation programs in which either has an interest. This option is automatically available unless a written request for exclusion is made to the county office staff by either spouse. There are exceptions to the rule, where spouses may not sign on behalf of each other for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations or other similar entities. Individual signatures are also required on certain Farm Loan Program and Farm Storage Facility Loan documents. For more clarification on spousal signature authority, feel free to contact your local FSA office.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc., FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact our office or any Farm Service Agency office near you for more information.

Bank Account Changes

Current policy mandates that FSA payments be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order for timely payments to be made, producers need to notify the FSA county office if your account has been changed or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if the FSA office is not aware of updates to your account and routing numbers.

Livestock Indemnity Program

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible livestock owners and contract growers for eligible livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather including losses due to floods, blizzards, disease, wildfires, extreme heat, and extreme cold. For 2011 losses, producers must file a notice of loss the earlier of either 30 calendar days of when the loss of livestock was apparent to the participant or October 31, 2011. A notice of loss can be reported to the office by phone, fax, or e-mail. Eligible livestock deaths must have occurred in the calendar year for which benefits are being requested. An Application for payment may be filed at any time in 2011, but must be filed no later than 30 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the loss of livestock occurred. Please contact the office for additional eligibility requirements. A list of eligible livestock is available at www.fsa.usda.gov/mt.

Farming Operation Changes

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have added or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

Appeal Process

After an FSA official makes a decision on your request for USDA services or application, you will be sent a letter informing you of the decision and options you can pursue if you disagree. Generally, program participants have three choices — an informal review with the original agency decision-maker, an opportunity for mediation and finally an appeal to the next level of authority within the agency.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its program and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotope, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

HILL COUNTY FSA OFFICE
206 25th Ave W Suite 2
Havre, MT ZIP 59501



PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Bozeman, MT 59715
PERMIT #54

Selected Interest Rates -March 2011	
Farm Operating - Direct	2.50%
Farm Ownership - Direct	4.875%
Farm Ownership - Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer or Rancher	1.50%
Conservation Loan	4.875%
Emergency - Actual Loss	3.750%
Farm Storage Facility - 7-year	2.875%
Farm Storage Facility - 10-year	3.500%
Farm Storage Facility - 12-year	3.875%
Commodity Loans 1996-Present	1.250%
90-Day Treasury Bill	0.125%

FSA: Upcoming Important Dates to Remember:

April 15:	CRP "General Signup 41" Ends
May 31:	Final Date to Request 2010 Marketing Assistance Loans/LDPs on Corn, Dry Peas, Grain Sorghum, Lentils, Mustard Seed, Safflower Seed, Chickpeas, Soybeans, and Sunflower Seed
June 1:	2011 DCP & 2011 ACRE Programs Filing Deadline
July 15:	Acreage Reporting Deadline
July 15:	2010 ACRE/NAP Production Reporting Deadline
July 29:	SURE Sign-up Deadline for 2009 Crop Year
Continues:	Continuous Conservation Reserve Program

Montana FSA Notice to Current Newsletter Recipients

Non-active agriculture producers must "opt-in" to receive future newsletters

Effective March 1, 2011, the Montana Farm Service Agency has issued a new newsletter policy geared toward improving FSA newsletter delivery and efficiency to the individual farmers, ranchers and agriculture community. FSA newsletters will continue to be sent to active agriculture producers as determined by the county FSA offices. No action is needed for active producers unless your household or business is receiving duplicate newsletters in which case you should inform your local county FSA office. If you are not an "active" producer but are a landowner or are interested in receiving or continuing to receive a FSA newsletter, you must inform your local county office that you'd like to "Opt-in" and be added to the newsletter mailing list. In addition, you can choose to receive your newsletter electronically. Each newsletter not mailed saves the agency and taxpayer \$0.39. To request the electronic newsletter be emailed to you instead of receiving a newsletter through mail, please contact Lisa Toth at the Hill County FSA office.